

# R. F. D.

*The third of four advertisements descriptive of The Country Gentleman*

Farming today is a highly technical business. A farm paper, to serve its readers fully, must qualify as a technical authority. It must be able to give advice on a range of subjects as wide as all agriculture and as deep as all science. This advice, too, must be on a plane equal to that of government bulletins, and of the best experts.

Such service must be prompt, for growing crops and destructive pests do not wait. It must be personal, for the inquirer asks only the difficult, unusual questions to which he cannot find an answer in the experience of his own neighbors. It must be thorough, for thousands of dollars investment may hang upon one decision.

It is this authoritative, prompt, personal and thorough service which The Country Gentleman gives its readers, and which has won their confidence and support.

The service is rendered through the mails by a department in The Country Gentleman known as the R. F. D. Letter Box.

The farmer writes a letter to the R. F. D. Letter Box Department, asking the question that is troubling him. In two or three days, or a week at most, he receives his answer and can at once put into effect the practical suggestion it brings.

More than 100 experts aid in rendering this service. They are picked men—men prominent in the Federal Department of Agriculture, state experiment stations and colleges, successful operators of large and small farms, orchards, dairies, poultry plants. Only skilled specialists in some one branch of modern agriculture are chosen and each advises only on his specialty. And although this service is gratuitous to the reader, the adviser is paid a fee for these replies, in proportion to the knowledge and attention they require. This, together with the deep interest which each of these men himself takes in the progress of scientific agriculture, ensures careful and complete treatment of the questions.

The rapidity with which the volume of this correspondence has grown shows its true usefulness. Often more than 100 letters a day are answered.

A Nebraskan asks what kind of a container should be used for peas and beans to be shipped twelve miles to market by express.

A man in Minnesota asks about draining a peat bog.

A Californian asks about the feed values of milo maize and cotton seed when fed to hogs.

An Indianan requests a plan for a basement stable.

Hundreds of these letters come from persons who say: "We followed your advice before with such good results that we want to ask you some more questions." And there are many farmers who regularly depend on The Country Gentleman and come back over and over again.

A significant feature of the correspondence is that 25% of the letters are either signed or obviously written by women. They emphasize that country women are closely concerned with actual work on the farm and that they read The Country Gentleman and rely upon it quite as much as do their husbands.

### Some of the questions from readers answered by The Country Gentleman

Replanning an old farm	Plan for farm tool house
The kind of clover to sow	How to find customers for eggs
Varieties of apples to plant	How to lay out a homestead
Pruning the raspberry	The best books on bee keeping
Fertilizers for celery	Breaking bad habits in a dog
Growing flowers for market	How to can string beans
Remedy for asparagus rust	Pasture crops for bees
Spray for strawberries	Tanning rabbit skins
Nuts to grow in the North	Control of Canada thistle
A plan for shrubbery planting	Cost of cold storage
Lime for alfalfa	Selling buttermilk cheese
Ground barley for milch cows	Cost accounts for a farm
How to smoke pork	How to keep farm help
Treatment for foundered horse	Treatment of hog cholera
Crops to grow for pigs	Kitchen sewage disposal
Dry mash for poultry	How to clean soy bean seed
Installing the water wheel	Recipe for sweet cider
Forms for concrete posts	Alfalfa for silage
Where to buy bean threshers	Old auto for farm power
	Plan of convenient kitchen

This whole service has two results of importance to the manufacturer who is judging The Country Gentleman as a medium for reaching the farm market:

1. It develops among the readers a downright confidence in the publication, a reliance and a habit of responding to what they read in it. This responsiveness is illustrated by the fact that one article in The Country Gentleman recently sent 10,000 letters to the Department of Agriculture from our readers. This responsiveness adds much to the value of the advertising columns.
2. This correspondence also means that the readers advise the publication. They do this unknowingly, through these same inquiring letters. The questions, tabulated and classified, show the trend of thought among farmers—what they are thinking and doing, what they want to know about, where they need help. To the editors, therefore, these letters are, every month, the inspiration of new features for the publication itself, which bring it closer and closer to the true needs of its readers.

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY, INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA

*The Ladies' Home Journal*

*The Saturday Evening Post*

*The Country Gentleman*